

E P A PROJECT

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT, INC

MEMORANDUM: REGION V

COST CENTER EP 151-15

TO: Mr. Greg Vanderlaan

FROM: Technical Assistance Team

VIA: Scott McCone JK FOR SM

SUBJECT: Dead Creek, Sauget, Illinois (TDD#5-8012-1)

DATE: December 12, 1980

COMMENTS:

On December 10, 1980 Mr. Tony Rutter of your office and I met with representatives of the Illinois EPA regarding the subject project. Mr. Geoff Langley furnished us with their file material and outlined the project for us. In the afternoon we met with Mr. John Renkus, the project investigator, and Mr. Bill Busch, head of Water Pollution Field Operations. Mr. Renkus described the project in detail and summarized the latest field sampling results.

The project is motivated to a great extent from media pressure, especially from the St. Louis newspapers. In May, 1980 there had been reports of Dead Creek between Queeny St. and Judith Lane in Cahokia, Ill. smoking spontaneously. A Mr. Pete Laumann of Judith Lane complained that his dog had died the day after it had rolled in the creek bed.

In the past Dead Creek had received industrial effluents from a variety of industries, including Amax Zinc Co., Cerro Copper Co., Monsanto Corp., and a rubber reprocessing plant. Dead Creek was supposedly blocked up at Queeny St. eliminating these industrial discharges, since at least 1971. However, the creek was still used as a waste pit since that time by the Waggoner Trucking Co. and others. At one time the creek was blocked at Judith Lane to prevent contaminated waters from being transported downstream. At present water does not move in the creek except after rainfall events.

Illinois EPA personnel took samples from the creek and adjacent area and had the creek and a connecting pond fenced off from public access in the portion under consideration (Queeny St. to Judith Lane). This activity removed the project from an environmental emergency situation. Sediment in the Dead Creek bed yielded very high (up to several thousand ppm) levels of PCB's and several metals, including barium, copper, lead, nickel, phosphorus, and zinc. Unacceptably high levels of chlorobenzene compounds were found in a few of the samples.

At present there appears to be no environmental emergency at the site. Test results are not yet available to determine if there is migration of any of the metals or the PCB's. Such results are necessary to determine if removal of contaminated soil will be necessary.

With no emergency situation, the project does not appear to qualify for 311 funds; the Coast Guard has determined this on a previous inspection. However because the materials are designated hazardous substances, the project should be eligible for Superfund cleanup, when such funds become available.

On December 11, 1980 we met the same Illinois EPA personnel on the Dead Creek site and verified the situation as described to us. Photos from this inspection will be forwarded when they become available.

The IEPA is currently looking into a relevant project, the presence of a buried hazardous waste dump adjacent to the creek at Queeny St. The agency staff are looking into the possibility of aerial infrared reconnaissance to define this problem.

Jerome Kelly
Jerry Kelly
JK:km